

4. CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY

Spiritual formation has always been understood by the early Christians as the practical outworking of Christian theology. As a 4th century monk puts it, 'Prayer is theology and theology is prayer'. In the last two centuries, however, the spiritual insights of our forefathers have often been downplayed by our modern and technocratic beliefs that the past is 'old-fashioned' while the future and the new is always better. The aim of Christian Spirituality courses, therefore, is to introduce students to the diverse traditions and practices of Christian Spirituality over the last 2,000 years, so that the lessons learnt here may complement our evangelical understanding of spiritual formation and help us avoid the spiritual pitfalls that the 21st century will may yet bring to our lives.

CS101 SPIRITUALITY FOR CHRISTIAN FORMATION

(3 credits, offered annually in Semester 2)

The organising framework for this course will be the Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6. This course will have four components: establishing the framework for Christian Spirituality in its biblical and historical development; relationship with God; relationship with self; relationship with others.

CH/CS260 THE ROOTS OF CHRISTIANITY: THE WISDOM OF THE CHURCH FATHERS FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

(3 credits, offered bi-annually on Semester 1)

The Patristic period or the period of the Church Fathers (2nd to 5th centuries) is one of the most important eras of the Christian Church. Some of the key tenets of our Protestant faith, such as salvation by grace and the doctrine of the Trinity, find their doctrinal roots from this era. The aim of this course is to equip students with the historical, theological and spiritual background necessary for appreciating and benefitting from the teachings of the early church fathers. Besides covering a wide range of theological, historical and spiritual topics, students will spend a considerable time reading patristic texts, discussing and reflecting on the contemporary relevance and application of patristic teachings in the 21st century.

CS151 CHRISTIAN BIOGRAPHY

(1.5 credits, available for Private Studies)

This is a study of selected key figures in Church history with a view to understanding how they became great spiritual leaders and the conditions in the Church which contributed to their outstanding leadership.

CS152 PRAYER: A SURVEY OF ITS TRADITIONS AND PRACTICES

(1.5 credits, available for Private Studies)

This course explores prayer as a personal journey as well as a corporate communion of friendship with God. A historical survey will be made of the various traditions of prayer, ranging from the Anglican Prayer Book to extemporaneous prayer. The course aims to give a clearer perspective of prayer and provides an impetus to further growth in prayer.

CS211 ANCIENT WISDOM FOR EVERYDAY SPIRITUALITY: READING THE SPIRITUAL CLASSICS OF CHRISTIANITY

This is an introduction to the Christian spiritual traditions and practices over the last 2,000 years. Christian spirituality has always been grounded on the love of God the Father, as it is expressed through the sacrificial love of His Son and the Gift of His Holy Spirit. For every generation of Christians, their particular responses to this love of the Triune God have always taken place in the context of their social-cultural history and challenges. This, in turn, has given rise to a wide

variety of Christian spiritual traditions, such as the Patristic, Benedictine, Cistercian, Orthodox, Coptic, Chinese Nestorian, Reformed and Evangelical movements, just to name a few. For contemporary Christians, there is great value in learning from these spiritual forefathers: this will not only allow us to see clearly the spiritual threats and opportunities that we now face, but will also provide us with spiritual resources, exemplary models and fresh perspectives necessary to address such contemporary challenges.

CS/MM263 GOD 24/7: DISCERNING, EXPERIENCING AND REFLECTING GOD IN EVERY ASPECT OF LIFE

(3 credits)

This unit will explore the integral connection between a biblically based spirituality and everyday life. It will examine a range of contexts such as the home, workplace, and neighbourhood, activities such as eating, travel and recreation, and relationships such as marriage and friendships, as well as the typical ups and downs, challenges and temptation of life. This will take place with a view to discovering the presence and purposes of God in all these areas.

CS391 CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY GUIDED STUDY

(1.5 credits)

This guided study is for students who wish to explore a specific area of study within the field of Christian Spirituality or Spiritual Theology. Upon approval of a topic, the student will engage in independent research under the supervision of a faculty member. For students planning to write a MCS Thesis it is compulsory to take a guided study on the thesis topic first.

In 2013 – 2015, other Christian Spirituality courses offered will include Asian Church History and Spirituality, Ministry and Spirituality, Spiritual Discernment, Spiritual Dynamics and Retreat and, Mentoring and Discipleship.